

# Cisco ANZ Delivers Information “By the People, for the People”



Australia and New Zealand region introduced local communications channel based on Digital Signs.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Cisco Australia and New Zealand (ANZ)

1100 Employees in ANZ; 70,000 Worldwide

### Challenge:

- Communicate locally relevant content in compelling format
- Foster sense of connection for local employees
- Influence behavior change

### Solution:

- Published employee-created content in Cisco ANZ offices, using Cisco Digital Signs solution

### Results:

- Helped Cisco ANZ employees become more engaged and connected
- Positively influenced mobile phone usage and use of engineering resources

## Challenge

Employees of global companies often crave a closer local identity. “To feel connected, employees want to know about new hires, local programs, and local customer and partner successes,” says SM Davis, collaboration and engagement lead for Cisco Australia and New Zealand (ANZ).

This was the case for Cisco ANZ, whose 1100 employees work in 10 offices up to eight hours apart by plane. But finding an effective local communications channel presented a challenge. “Email is not captivating, and people generally don’t like listening to lengthy group voicemail messages,” Davis says.

Although many Cisco offices take part in an enterprise Cisco® Digital Signs program, the content is managed centrally and selected for global, not local, relevance. Employees in Cisco ANZ indicated they did not want to view digital signage content that they had already seen on the intranet or in email.



“FRED, our Cisco Digital Signs program, is a powerful communications channel to motivate and inform the workforce about programs with a local flavor. FRED is a classic example of IT enabling business process change and cultural innovation.”

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**Les Williamson**

Vice President for Cisco Asia Pacific

## Solution

Cisco ANZ decided to take advantage of its existing Cisco Digital Signs solution to create a communications channel solely for the region. The goal was to foster a sense of community within the larger Cisco enterprise by spotlighting local people, programs, and successes. The program is called FRED, for Frequently Refreshing, Engaging Display. “We wanted to give the digital signage program a personality and make it part of everyday office conversation, as in, ‘Did you see what FRED is saying?’ and ‘Let’s tell FRED so that everyone will know,’” says David Eglin, digital media lead for Cisco ANZ.

The content guidelines state, “FRED enables employees to gather virtually by the water cooler to hear and share current events they wouldn’t learn of anywhere else.” The motto is “by the people, for the people,” and all employees are invited to submit content relevant to the local community, such as:

- Team activities and community service projects
- Sports activities by teams or individuals
- Rewards and recognition
- New hires and role changes
- Local partner achievements
- Customer successes
- Facilities information
- Local program news
- Sales performance

Conversely, employees are asked to not contribute corporate messaging originating from outside the region, product launches or pricing information, or any other information that can be found on the intranet or was emailed.

Employees create their own PowerPoint slides, saving them in a designated folder. Cisco Digital Media Manager retrieves content from the folder and publishes it to Cisco Digital Media Players that power Cisco LCD Professional Series Displays throughout the region, one or two in each office. Each slide is typically played for 15 seconds, and most content remains available between 7 and 10 working days. “Any shorter, and it is unlikely the viewer has seen the message often enough to remember it,” Davis says. “Any longer, and it tends to fade into the background.”

Guidelines for presentations include using graphics instead of text when possible, and a large font that viewers can read from across the room or down the hall. “Research suggests you have 0.3 seconds to catch the attention of a viewer,” Davis says. “After you’ve caught attention, you have three seconds to engage the viewer.”

Cisco ANZ also uses the Cisco Digital Signs solution to broadcast quarterly organizational communications from the executive team. Employees who choose to can watch the broadcasts in public areas instead of at their desks.

FRED soon became part of the employee experience, and mobile employees asked for a way they could view the same content. Now they can click the FRED icon on the Cisco ANZ intranet to see what FRED has to say on a smartphone, tablet, or laptop.



## Results

### Effective Organizational Communications with Local Focus

FRED has become the central hub for the Cisco ANZ sales organization to share local news and activities. "Creating a strong local identity within a larger global enterprise helps employees feel engaged, which fosters teamwork and collaboration," says Les Williamson, vice president for Cisco Asia Pacific. "FRED, our Cisco Digital Signs program, is a powerful communications channel to motivate and inform the workforce about programs with a local flavor. FRED is a classic example of IT enabling business process change and cultural innovation."

Employees say FRED helps them feel more connected. "It's amazing how much information one can absorb from FRED even while making a cup of coffee," says Kevin Bloch, chief technology officer for Cisco ANZ Sales. "If you think about the cumulative effect of sharing a little extra information every day with every employee, you get some idea of FRED's potential impact on organizational communications."

Adds Ashley Woodcroft, Cisco ANZ partner marketing manager, "A picture is worth a thousand words, and the use of photos and images on FRED is a fantastic way to communicate. Publishing lead times are short, which means content is always topical."

### Effective Employee Behavior Change

Employees at all levels of Cisco ANZ are enthusiastic about FRED, and some regard the program as the company's most effective vehicle for changing employee behavior. "Giving employees ownership of content helped to change the culture," Davis says. Successes include:

- Changing employee mobile phone usage patterns: The Cisco ANZ finance team, initially skeptical of the return on investment for digital signage, now lauds FRED for helping to lower mobile phone

"FRED provides a voice for local employees, reflecting the specific interests of people who work and live in Australia and New Zealand. We made the content relevant by actively seeking employee feedback."

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#### David Eglin

Digital Media Lead  
Cisco ANZ

bills. "We published an actual, extraordinarily high mobile phone bill with the caption, 'Is this your phone bill?'" says Peter Jackson, finance director for Cisco Asia and ANZ. "This attracted attention to roaming charges in a way that an email or voicemail could not. The average mobile phone bill has since decreased by one-third."

- Encouraging sales teams to work with a central technical services team: Cisco ANZ sales teams originally knew little about the Cisco Technology Solutions Network (TSN), a team of systems engineers that provides pre-sales technical services. Publishing testimonials from sales engineers about the time they save by working with the TSN has increased the number of teams that use this resource.



- Lowering helpdesk call volume: The FRED team asked the Cisco global helpdesk for the top five caller issues. One of those is passwords resets, and FRED recently shared a tip, with the goal of saving time for employees and helpdesk agents.

The Cisco team responsible for FRED identifies three main success factors. One factor is placing the displays in locations where employees are likely to view the content at various times of day. Another factor is rigorous enforcement of the policy to only publish locally relevant content. Finally, the team periodically conducts informal surveys to find out one slide they like and one they do not like, using the feedback to continually refine content guidelines.

In response to customer interest, Cisco ANZ conducts bimonthly customer forums on using Cisco Digital Signs to foster a sense of local community. Several Fortune 500 companies have adopted a similar program using Cisco Digital Signs, including a global accountancy firm, major beverage corporation, and airline. "Many companies in Australia and New Zealand are expanding rapidly from a few hundred to several thousands of employees," Davis says. "They are drawn to Cisco Digital Signs as a way to help people stay connected to the company and not feel isolated as it grows."

Eglin concludes, "FRED provides a voice for local employees, reflecting the specific interests of people who work and live in Australia and New Zealand. We made the content relevant by actively seeking employee feedback."

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**SM Davis**

Collaboration and Engagement Lead  
Cisco ANZ



### Next Steps

Offices that already have digital signage have requested more displays, and others are adding FRED to their existing digital signage programs. For example, the Cisco Technical Assistance Center (TAC) in Sydney had implemented Cisco Digital Signs to report customer waiting times and other metrics, and is now interspersing FRED content.

### For More Information

To learn more about Cisco Digital Signs, visit: [www.cisco.com/go/dms](http://www.cisco.com/go/dms)

### Product List

#### Cisco Digital Signs Solution

Cisco Digital Media Manager

Cisco Digital Media Players

Cisco Professional Series LCD Displays



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